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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: USCENTCOM CDR GENERAL PETRAEUS'
MEETING WITH SECURITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN SULEYMENOV, AUGUST 13

REF: ASTANA 1250

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland: 1.4 (A), (B), (D)

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: During an August 13 meeting in Astana, USCENTCOM CDR General Petraeus and Security Council Chairman Suleymenov discussed potential Kazakhstani noncombatant military and other assistance to support U.S. policy in Afghanistan, including the possibility of Kazakhstan hosting a logistics/transportation hub as a back-up to the Manas Transit Center. Suleymenov said President Nazarbayev judges that U.S. Afghanistan policy is "absolutely correct" and wants quick decisions for what Kazakhstan will do to help support this policy. General Petraeus suggested that a joint USCENTCOM-USTRANSCOM experts team might be able to arrive in Kazakhstan within a month to develop a detailed proposal for a logistics/transit hub. The meeting was unusually frank, detail-oriented, and cordial. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On August 13 in Astana, Security Council Chairman Kairbek Suleymenov welcomed USCENTCOM Commander General David Petraeus and underlined Kazakhstan's full intention to fulfill all of its commitments to the United States, which should stand, he said, as a good example for Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

¶3. (S/NF) After providing a detailed read-out of U.S. policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as how the post-2006 strategy and approach in Iraq relates to the current AfPak strategy -- and after reprising his meetings earlier in the day with the Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs (septels) -- General Petraeus told Suleymenov he wanted to respond to President Nazarbayev's offer to the United States to locate a logistics/transportation hub for Afghanistan in Kazakhstan (reftel). He noted he and Minister of Defense Adilbek Dzhaksybekov had already agreed that a team of U.S. experts would come to Kazakhstan to work on a concrete proposal. Petraeus suggested such collaboration would help replace the Great-Game mentality in the larger region with a model of broad partnership to counter terrorism, extremism, and narcotics.

U.S. AF-PAK POLICY IS "ABSOLUTELY CORRECT"

¶4. (S/NF) Suleymenov responded that U.S. policy is "absolutely correct -- stability in Pakistan is required for stability in Afghanistan, and the answer cannot be solely military. Our President tells the other Presidents in the region -- and I do not mean just in the immediate region -- that he supports the U.S. view. Nazarbayev is very positive about the United States." General Petraeus expressed appreciation for this support. Suleymenov commented, "The critics of U.S. policy should be in your place!" He reaffirmed that President Nazarbayev supports developing a logistics facility hub in Kazakhstan as a way to demonstrate concrete support for U.S. policy in Afghanistan. He urged that U.S. and Kazakhstani experts meet soonest to develop a concrete proposal.

NEXT STEPS

¶5. (S/NF) Moving to a greater level of detail, Suleymenov said that after a year of debate, Kazakhstan has identified the staff officers who will go to the International Security Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul, and that this will happen soon. About trainers and instructors for the Explosive Ordnance Destruction school in Mazar-i-Sharif, he said that this, too, will happen. However, Kazakhstan must follow its own standard procedures. The next step is a "legal agreement" through the U.S. Embassy, which will be reported to the cabinet of ministers for approval. After ascertaining the view of the government of Afghanistan, President Nazarbayev will then

ASTANA 00001423 002 OF 002

finalize this decision. [NOTE: The DATT, in the first instance, and the Ambassador will follow up to determine exactly what Suleymenov means by a "legal agreement." We strongly prefer agreement by an exchange of diplomatic notes, rather than a document that would need Kazakhstani inter-agency approval and then ratification by the parliament, a process that could drag on for months. END NOTE.]

"OUR NEIGHBORS HAVE SENSITIVITIES, BUT WE MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS"

¶6. (S) Suleymenov said he wanted to be certain that Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are fully informed about these possible developments, and suggested that they, too, might want to provide noncombatant personnel to Afghanistan. General Petraeus noted these are policy decisions and that there has long been an understanding that Afghanistan's contiguous neighbors cannot provide troops, mainly because of "the neighbor to the west [i.e., Iran]," rather than their northern neighbor (i.e., Russia). General Petraeus also noted his pending Kazbrig visit and suggested that as Kazakhstan increased its economic and political stature, it might consider the idea of offering Kazbrig for a UN mission to demonstrate Kazakhstan's regional, and in fact, global role. Suleymenov said others had suggested this and that he supports this as an issue for further discussion.

¶7. (S) Suleymenov became more precise about Kazakhstan's policy debate for military personnel, even if noncombatant, to deploy to Afghanistan. He noted Kazakhstan had provided troops for the international coalition in Iraq. "Iraq was far away, but Afghanistan is in our backyard and sensitive for our neighbors. Our assistance inside Afghanistan will ultimately be a political decision. When I report to President Nazarbayev, I'll need to tell him exactly what you are asking our neighbors to do, too." Suleymenov said Kazakhstan is especially sensitive about President Karimov's views, since Uzbekistan borders Afghanistan and has very legitimate concerns about the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: "We would not want one wildfire to ignite a neighboring wildfire," i.e., that terrorists and extremists

move from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Central Asia.

¶8. (S/NF) At the end of the meeting, Suleymenov urged that a team of U.S. military experts arrive in Kazakhstan soonest to develop, with Kazakhstani counterparts, a concrete proposal for a logistics/transportation hub that could be presented quickly to President Nazarbayev for his approval. Suleymenov said, "We want these decisions sealed before we become chairman of the OSCE so that together we can present a common front." He added, "We do not make promises to anyone that we cannot keep."

¶9. (C) COMMENT: Suleymenov is the equivalent of the U.S. National Security Adviser. He is also considerably more powerful than the Minister of Defense, because the MOD is an implementing, not a policy-making, body. In this meeting with General Petraeus, Suleymenov was more focused and more forthcoming about Kazakhstan's internal decision-making processes than we have seen him before. The meeting concluded cordially with a group photo. END COMMENT.

¶10. (U) USCENTCOM has cleared this caQ

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